



city of
greenville

News Release

GREENVILLE ZOO ANNOUNCES GIRAFFE PREGNANCY

Giraffe birth would be the first for zoo

Greenville, S.C. – The Greenville Zoo announced today that its 6-year-old Masai giraffe, Autumn, is due to give birth to her first calf sometime this summer. Veterinary staff confirmed the pregnancy earlier this year through hormone analysis and will continue to monitor her progress through her 15-month gestation period.

“We were hoping to keep it a secret for a bit longer, but some things are just too big to hide,” said Greenville Zoo Director Jeff Bullock. “As this is Autumn’s first pregnancy, there is a bit of anxiety and excitement that comes along with such a momentous occasion. The staff is hard at work preparing for the first of what we hope to be many giraffe births here at the Greenville Zoo.”

The giraffes are currently on a breeding loan. As part of the loan, Autumn came to the Greenville Zoo from the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston in 2007 to be paired with the zoo’s male giraffe, Walter, 7, from the San Diego Zoo.

“It is a proud moment for the entire zoo staff when there is successful breeding with endangered animals,” said Bullock. “We will proceed cautiously as this is her first calf, and we want to do everything possible to make sure all goes well for Autumn and her baby.”

Giraffe births are a bit unusual in that they give birth while standing, and the baby is born hooves-first. A newborn calf, which can weigh between 120-150 pounds and stand 6-feet tall at birth, will usually take its first steps within an hour of its birth. Giraffes are one of the few animals born with horns on their heads.

ABOUT THE MASAI GIRAFFE

The tallest animal on earth, giraffes can grow to stand 19 feet and weigh more than 3,000 pounds. Masai giraffe, also known as Kilimanjaro Giraffe, is the largest of the up to nine subspecies of giraffe recognized. Giraffes are best known for their long necks, which have only seven vertebrae—similar to a human's neck. This physical characteristic allows them to browse on high ranging foliage beyond the reach of competing antelopes and to watch for predators such as lions. In the wild, giraffes can be found living in loose open herds in the savannas of Africa. Their pale buff coats are boldly marked with irregular chestnut or dark brown blotches which help to camouflage them in their surroundings. Giraffe markings are as unique as human fingerprints; no two animals display the same. Giraffes have an unusually long lifespan compared to other ruminants, up to 25 years in the wild and often longer in zoos.

About the Greenville Zoo

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), Greenville Zoo is rated one of the best tourist attractions in South Carolina, attracting over 270,000 people annually. Operated by the City of Greenville, the 14-acre facility features wildlife from around the world including giraffes, monkeys, giant tortoises and elephants. Visitors can also enjoy one of the zoo's most popular exhibits, the Reptile Building, which is home to a variety of lizards, frogs, turtles and snakes.

The Greenville Zoo is open seven days a week, except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Beginning Monday, April 2 and running through September 30, the zoo will extend its hours of operation to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., offering guests an opportunity to take advantage of cooler mornings. Zoo entry ticket sales will close at 4:15 p.m. Admission to the Greenville Zoo is \$7.75 for adults and \$4.50 for children (ages 3 to 15). For more information about the Greenville Zoo, visit www.greenvillezoo.com. Follow

the zoo on Facebook at facebook.com/greenvillezoo beginning June 1 for 30 days of giraffe facts as the zoo prepares for the birth of the tallest baby.

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